3.3.10 MINERAL RESOURCES

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
(a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

Mineral resources in Contra Costa County include aggregate and stone for commercial, industrial, and construction uses. There are several active quarry mining operations in the county, which generate essential aggregate and mineral resources. These materials include: (1) broken and crushed stone used primarily for waterway armor (riprap); (2) crushed rock used mainly as road base; (3) sand and gravel used as bituminous and concrete aggregate; (4) specialty sands including foundry and glass; and (5) dimension stone. The quarries of Contra Costa County include: two quarries at Mt. Diablo for production of crushed stone; one quarry which produced graywacke-type sandstone at Castro Point; one quarry which produced Pliocene Moraga volcanic rocks near Orinda; and two quarries which produced Tertiary sandstone at Pacheco and Walnut Creek. Antioch sand dunes provided sand from two pits. There were two sandstone beds of the Domengine formation (Eocene) with two quarries located near Cowell and one quarry located in Antioch.

Contra Costa County

Contra Costa County recognizes the value of mineral resources as a supply for construction-related materials to accommodate local development as well as a source of significant employment within the industry. The county, in conjunction with the State,

has identified significant aggregate resource areas at Mount Zion, Mount Diablo, Port Costa and in the area of Byron (Contra Costa County 2005).

Regulatory Setting

Federal

There are no Federal regulations related to mineral resources relevant to the proposed Project.

State

California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975

The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975 requires classification of land into Mineral Resources Zones (MRZs), according to the known or inferred mineral potential of that area. SMARA is part of California Public Resources Code (PRC), Division 2, Chapter 9, section 2710, et seq. Oil operations in California are regulated by the Division of Oil and Gas of the Department of Conservation (Cal. Pub. Res. Code section 3000 et seq.).

Depending on the region, natural resources can include geologic deposits of valuable minerals used in manufacturing processes and the production of construction materials. SMARA was enacted in 1975 to limit new development in areas with significant mineral deposits. SMARA requires the office of the acting state geologist to classify the lands within California based on mineral resource availability. The state geologist is responsible for classifying areas within California that are subject to urban expansion or other irreversible land uses. These classifications are by MRZs, according to the presence or absence of significant mineral resources. The process is based solely on the underlying geology without regard to existing land use or land ownership. The primary goal of the mineral land classification is to ensure that the mineral potential of the land is recognized by local government decision-makers and considered before making land use decisions that could preclude mining. California Geological Survey's (CGS's) Special Publication 51 provides the guidance for MRZ identification; the criteria for establishing the zones are based on four general categories:

- MRZ-1 applies to areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence;

- MRZ-2 applies to areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood exists for their presence;

- MRZ-3 applies to areas containing mineral deposits, the significance of which cannot be evaluated; and

- MRZ-4 applies to areas where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other zone.

SMARA states that the extraction of minerals is essential to the continued economic well-being of the State and to the needs of society, and the reclamation of mined lands is necessary to prevent or minimize adverse effects on the environment and to protect the public health and safety. The reclamation of mined lands will permit the continued mining of minerals and will provide for the protection and subsequent beneficial use of the mined and reclaimed land. Surface mining takes place in diverse areas where the geologic, topographic, climatic, biological, and social conditions are significantly different. Accordingly, reclamation operations and their specifications may vary (PRC section 2711).

Local

Contra Costa County's General Plan has elements that address mineral resources as does the city of Hercules. However, after reviewing the County's General Plan, it was found that there are no mineral resources located near the proposed Project location.

Impact Analysis and Mitigation

Impact Discussion

(a, b) The Project site is not located within the Mineral Resource Areas identified in the Contra Costa County General Plan (2005). No impact related to the loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value to the region and the residents of the State or a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan would result from the proposed Project. (No Impact)